A LETTER TO THE KING

When DUKE of YORK,

Perswading him to return to the Protestant Religion, wherein the chief Errors of the Papists are exposed, and the Tendency of their Doctrines to promote Arbitrary Government, proved.

By an Old Cavalier, *and Faithful Son of the Church of* England, *as Establish'd by Law.*

Illustrious Sir!

WHen I look up to the Greatness of your Quality, and down on my own Meanness, I cannot but tremble to make this Address, so liable to be censur'd as presumptuous, and obnoxious to variety of Misconstruction. But since my Pen is guided by an Heart fill'd with profound Loyalty, and Veneration towards all the Royal Family, and a sincere respect, and most passionate desires for the particular prosperity (Temporal and Eternal) of your Royal Highness, I cannot refrain discharging what I apprehended my Duty, and therefore with good *Esther*, finding not only my Country, but your Highness also in such apparent (I wish it may not prove inevitable) hazard of Ruin, am resolved to adventure forth, and cast my poor weak Sentiments as your feet; and if they perish, they perish.

Fis generally reported, That you are long since turn'd *Papist*, and so far believ'd, That every day many hundred thousand *protestants* are melted into Tears, and Horror meerly on that Consideration, and lament the same, as one of the greatest Calamities that hath happened in our Age, I must do my self so much Justice as to declare, That

I am

I am none of those fanatical Spirits, that either raile, or lightly credit Rumours to the prejudice of my Superiors. But besides what has been sworn by persons, whose Evidence none have hitherto been able to invalidate by any substantial Reasons, or Incoherence in their Depositions; Your Highnesses Conduct and Deportment for many years past, your absenting from the publick Worship of our Church, Refusing legal Oaths and Tests, your countenancing, retaining an intimate Correspondency with *Roman Catholicks*; and many other Reasons not fit, at least unnecessary here to be mention'd, do all loudly speak it: And for those who would go about to deny it (as some wretched Pamphlet scriblers, and unthinking Health-drinkers have done,) besides the folly of the attempt, they unwarily cast a greater load of Ignominy and Dishonor on your Highness, whilst they pretend to vindicate you.

For is it imaginable, That a Prince of your Generosity and Prudence would so far suffer the Affairs of your Royal Brother to be imbroil'd, His Councils discompos'd, all the Protestants in the world swallowed up with Astonishment, and almost despair, your own Honour sullied, your Interest impaired, and these Three Kingdoms put into a deplorable Distraction, meerly upon a false suppostion, without rectifying in all this time their mistake by some real Demonstrations to the contrary? If such a *Capricio* should sway with your Highness, what were it but to render you the *worst Subject*, the most *unkind Brother*, the most *Impolitick Prince*, and the *maddest*, or most *monstrous Man* in the World?

I shall therefore take it for granted, and consequently must, tho' with all Humility and a Sorrow inexpressible, direct my Discourse to your Highness as *an Apostate* from the Protestant Faith; and if I am mistaken, 'tis your Highness has led *not only me*, but almost all the World into that Error.

I am not insensible of my own weakness, and how unfit I am to argue matters of Religion with your Highness, and those subtile *Sophisters* (the Pest of *Europe*, and Shame of Christianity) which are always croaking about Persons of Quality, whom they have perverted to their Idolatries; being my self but a *Lay-Gentleman*, of little *Learning*, and in the course of my Life more conversant with the *Sword*, than the *Pen*: And I must wonder with Regret, if none of the *Right Reverend Fathers*, my Lords the *Bishops*, or some of our other *Learned Divines* have not vigorously made Applications to your *Highness*, even in a publick Manner, to regain you to the *Protestant Communion*: If they have not chang'd you, as they are *God's Ambassadors* to shew some Reasons, why you have broke the League (your Baptismal vows) with his Church, and joyn'd your self to the Tents of his *Enemies*. If they have not adjur'd you in the Name of our Lord, to shew on what *offence* taken amongst *us*, and for what Beauties obser'd in the Church of *Rome*, you quitted the true *Spouse of Christ*, to follow the Enchantments of a *Strumpet*, whose shameless Adulteries have long since caused an utter Divorce between Her and the Blessed Jesus: If they have not solemnly called *Heaven and Earth* to Record, that they are ready to satisfie all your Scruples, to answer all your Objections; and to shew, That it is not through any default in them, for want of Endeavours, nor in our Church for want of Truth, but that your defection must be wilful, as well as unreasonable, whereby to render you either convicted, or inexcusible.

Nor do I doubt, but several of those Glorious Lights of our Church, may accordingly have discharged without fear of flattery their Functions herein, in private discourses: But certainly a matter of that inestimable importance, as wherein not only the Soul of one of the bravest *Princes* of the Earth, but also the whole *Protestant* Interest in the World, especially within these Three Nations, is so deeply and dangerously concern'd, might require, since I am sure it deserves a Publick and General Application:

Nor

Nor ought any, though the meanest of men, to be blam'd for contributing modestly, his help to prevent a disaster of such *universal influence*: And therefore who knows but that Almighty Providence, who overthrew *Jericho's* proud Walls of old, not with Battering Engines of war, but with the blast of contemptible *Rams-horns*, and is often pleased to make use of the weakest Instruments to effect mighty Works; may give a Blessing to these poor unpolish'd, inartifical Lines, which have nothing but the Power of Truth, and the Honesty of a sincere Intention to recommend them to your Princely Consideration?

That you were educated in protestant Principles, is notorious; I beseech your Highness therefore to satisfy the World what could induce you to a change. I shal not mension your Royal Grandfather, whose Learned Pen baffled all the Conclave, nor shal I insist on that Curse which he solemnly pronounced on any of his posterity that should turn *Papists*: I shal only say, Had you not the Example, and the Commands too of a most Indulgent, Pious Prince, your Royal Father, for perseverance therein; who, though barbarously murder'd by vile Men, yet continued stedfast, and even with his last breath discharg'd and clear'd the Doctrine of the Reformed Religion from having any share in their Crimes? What Impiety is it, if you should dare to profess your *Fathers Blessed Soul to be eternally damn'd!* and yet, if you are a Papist, you can do no less; for you cannot be such without believing, That there is no salvation out of the Pale of the Church, and that there is no Church but that of *Rome*; and I am confident none can have the Impudence to suggest, that He died in the communion of that Church: What follows then? or how will you answer this Horrid Scandal on his Sacred Memory, when you shall meet his glorified Spirit at the last dreadful Judgment-day? Nor can the keenest Jesuit blunt the edge of this Argument by a Retortion from the Consideration of your Highnesses Illustrious Mother: For though Papists are so audacious, as to place the Keys of Heaven at the Pope's Girdle, and uncharitably doom us All to unquenchable flames, not affording us so much as a Room in purgatory: yet Protestants are not so unchristian (but according to Scripture) leave secret things to God, and allow grains for Education, Prepossessions, Ignorance, *&c.* which is yet no more a Reason for any man to turn papist, than 'tis for him that stands safe on the shore to leap off into a vessel so rotten and leaky as just ready to sink, upon a presumption that still some of those that are in her may escape the danger: Or to chuse an impudent Quack, who boasts he only can cure him, and refuse a Learned physician, who modestly grants he may peradventure be healed by the other, though very improbably; but withal, that 'tis a Million to one, but the patient, under such hands, miscarries; and that in this case, eternally.

But quitting this Argument, which is only personal, I beseech your Highness to tell us, how you, or any Man of sense can so far forget, not only his Education and Interest, but his very Reason, as to imbrace Popery, frightful, detestable, ridiculous popery, that Chaos of Superstition, Idolatry, Error and Imposture, that has no foundation but a cheat; No ends but to gratifie pride and avarice; no solid Argument to promote and maintain it, but Impudence and Cruelty.

Popery, That depends wholly upon nice and poor uncertainties, and unprovable suppositions: As *1st.* That *Peter* was Bishop of *Rome*. *2dly*, That He left those one to be Heir of his Graces and Spirit, in a perpetual unfailable Succession: *3dly*. That He so bequeathed his Infallibility to his Chair, as that whosoever sits in it, cannot but speak Truth, so that all who sit where he sat, must by some secret Instinct, say as he taught; that what Christ said to him absolutely, without any respect to *Rome*, must be referr'd yea ty'd to that place alone, and fulfill'd in it. *4thly*. That *Linus*, *Clemens* and *Cletus* the

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the Scholars, and supposed Successors of *Peter*, must be preferr'd (in the Headship or the Church) to *John* the beloved Apostle, then still living. 5*thly*. That He whose Life is oft times monstrously debauch'd, his Judgment childishly ignorant, cannot yet, when in his Pontifical Chair, possibly erre. 6*thly*. That the Golden Line of this Apostolical Succession, in the confusion of so many long desperate Schisms, shamefully corrupt Usurpations and Intrusions, and confess'd Heresies, yet neither was nor can be broken.

Popery, That teaches Men to worship Stocks and Stones, and painted Clouts, with the same Honour as is due to our Creator; and left that practice should appear to her simple Clients too palpably opposite to Gods Law, most sacrilegiously stifles one of the Ten Commandments in their vulgar Catechisms and *Prayer*-Books.

Popery, That utterly confounds the true *Humanity* of Christ, while they give unto it Ten thousand places at once, and yet no place; Flesh, and no Flesh; several Members without distinction; a substance without quantity, and other Accidents, or Substance and Accidents, that cannot be seen, felt, or perceived; so that they make a Monster of their Saviour, or nothing.

Popery, That utterly overthrows the Perfection of Christ's satisfaction, for if all be not paid, how hath he satisfied? If temporal punishments in purgatory be yet due, how is all paid? And if these must be paid by us, how are they satisfied by him?

Popery, That hath made more Scriptures than ever the Holy Spirit dictated, or the Ancient Church received; and those which it doth make, Imperiously obtrudes upon the World, and while it thunders out Curses against all that will not add these Books to God's, seems to defie the Curse pronounc'd by God himself to those that add unto his Word, *Rev.* 22. 18.

Popery, That erects a Throne in the Conscience to a meer Man, and many times rather a Monster than a Man; and gives him absolute Power to make a sin of that which is none; and to dispense with that which is; to create New Articles of Faith, and to impose them upon Necessity of salvation; to make wicked men Saints, and Saints Gods; for even by the Confession of Papists, lewd and undeserving Men have leap'd into their Calendar, yet being once install'd there, they have the Honour of Altars, Temples and Invocations; some of them in a stile fit only for their Maker.

Popery, That robs the heart of all sound comfort, whilst it Teacheth us, That we neither can, nor ought to be assured of the Remission of our sins, and of present Grace, & future Salvation; that we can never know whether we have received the true Sacraments of God, because we cannot know the intention of the Minister, without which they are no Sacraments.

Popery, That racks the Conscience with the needless torture of a necessary shrift, wherein the vertue of an Absolution depends on the fulness of Confession, and that upon Examination, and the sufficiency of Examination is so full of scruples (besides infinite Cases of unresolved doubts in this feigned penance) that the poor Soul never knows when it is clear.

Popery, That under pretence of Religion plays the Bawd to sin, whilst both in practice it tolerates open Stews, and prefers Fornication, in some cases before honourable Matrimony, and gently blanches over wilful Violations of Gods Law with the favourable title of Venial Crimes.

Popery, That makes Nature vainly proud, in joyning her as co-partner with God in our Justification, Salvation, and hilely puffing her up with a conceit of her perfection and ability to keep more Laws than God hath made, whence their Doctrines of Merit and Supererogation, &c.

Popery, That requires no other Faith to Justification in Christians, than may be found in Devils themselves; who besides a confused Apprehension, can assent to the Truth of Gods revealed Will, and Popery requires no more.

Popery,

Popery, That instead of the pure Milk of the Gospel, hath long fed her starved Sons with such idle Legends, as the Reporter can hardly deliver without laughter, nor their Auditors be told of without shame and disclamation; so that the wiser sort of the World read these stories on Winter Evenings for sport, which the poor credulous multitude hear in their Churches with devout astonishment.

Popery, That requires nothing but meer Formality in our Devotions, the work wrought suffices alone in Sacraments, and in prayers; if the numbers be repeated by Rote, no matter for the Affection; as if God regarded not the Heart, but the Tongue and Hands, and while he understands us, cared little whether we understand our selves.

Popery, That hath been often dyed in the Blood of Princes, that in some cases teaches and allows Rebellion against God's Anointed, and both suborneth Treasons, and executes, pities, honours and rewards the Actors.

Popery, That overloads Men's Consciences with heavy burdens of infinite, unnecessary Traditions, far more than ever *Moses* Commented upon by all the *Jewish Rabbies*; imposing them with no less Authority, and exacting them with more Rigour, than any of the Royal Laws of their Maker.

Popery, That cozens the vulgar with nothing but shadows of Holiness in Pilgrimages, Processions, Offerings, Holy-Water, Latin Services, Images, Tapers, rich Vestures, garish Altars, Crosses, Censings, and a thousand such like, fit for Children and Fools, robbing them in the mean time of the sound and plain Helps of true Piety and Salvation.

Popery, That cares not by what wilful Falshods, Equivocations, Perjuries and Abominations it propagates it self, and maintains its credit: And therefore being conscious of her own Villanies, goes about to falsifie and deprave Authors, that might give Evidence against her, to surface all ancient Truths, to forge in *Gibionitish* Witnesses of their own forging, and leaves nothing unattempted against Heaven and Earth that might advance her Faction, and disable her Innocent and just Accusers.

This, this is the true figure of *Popery*, through whatever false Opticks your Highness may have view'd it. This is that for which you are resolv'd to hazard a Crown of Glory, and three temporal Diadems to boot; and to which you sacrifice both your own Fortunes, and the Tranquility of many Millions of Souls.

What then can the World, that knows the clear light of your Highness Elevated Understanding, imagine can be the Cause of your Resolution? Will they not be apt to conceive, that you have not espoused this Mock Religion purely for its own sake, but for some promised Dowry of an Absolute Monarchy, or Arbitrary power, which she might pretend to bring one day with her to your Embraces? But this is far below the Justice and Generosity of your Highness; to disworthy the thoughts of any considerate politician. For suppose any Prince, to whom the British Sceptre may hereafter devolve, intoxicated with the Tinsel Glories of the *French* Monarch's blustering Grandeur, should be so vain, as to hope to subjugate the English Liberties, and destroy the Constitution of the best Established Government on Earth, by assuming to himself the whole *Legislative* power, raising Money, and drawing his Subjects treasures without their common consent in Parliament, &c. and should be so extravagantly enamour'd on this fatal Project (fatal I say, because for above five hundred years it has shipwrack'd all that coasted that way,) as to be content to hurl his Religion, and exchange his Faith and turn Papist, on a presumption, that the same might facilitate and accomplish his Enterprize. As King *John*, 'tis said, resolved once to embrace *Mahometism*, rather than not to be restored of his Barons, claiming their just Liberties. Suppose I say all this should be, and that the present *Papists*, to get their Religion publickly establi-

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shed should comply with his Designs; yet still is it not most reasonable to believe, That having once gain'd their Point therein, they or their Posterity, will soon recal to mind their Birth-rights and Privileges due to them as Englishmen; and will they not then be perpetually tugging and struggling to regain them, whence continual disturbance will ensue, and a standing Army must be kept on foot to support this ill acquired Grandeur? For those Subjects contended with King *John* and King *Henry* the third, &c. tho they were Papists, and of the same Religion with those Princes, could not brook it, to be Slaves to their *Arbitrary Pleasures* in their Civil Rights: Besides, what a waking dream is it for any King that is free from the *Roman Yoke*, to think to make himself more Absolute by involving himself and his Kingdoms in Thraldom to the Church of *Rome*; wherein not only the *Pope* pretends a Right to domineer over him, but every *Ecclesiastick* esteem himself wholly exempt from his Jurisdiction, and all his People will be but half his Subjects, *viz.* in Temporals, for in Spirituals, and *in ordine ad spiritualia* (a monstrous Draw-net, that may include almost all the Actions of Humane Life,) they are wholly to be Conducted by his Holiness and his Subordinate Ministers. How therefore can your Highness, if a *Roman Catholick*, complain of the late successive Houses of Commons for pressing a Bill to exclude you? Is it any Disloyalty to endeavour to preserve the Imperial Crown of *England* from a Truckling and shameful Servitude to a Foreign Usurper's Power? Or is it any such unheard of thing to debar a Prince from a Throne, that hath obstinately disabled himself? Certainly, above all men, the *Roman* Catholicks ought not to murmur at this; for did not the Pope issue forth a Bill to exclude your Grandfather, King *James*, unless he would turn *Papist*? And did not the Romanists, though they acknowledged the Title of of your other Grandfather, *Henry* the Great, to the *French* Diadem, yet refuse to pay him any Obedience, because a *Protestant*, and on that only score fought against him as long as he continued so, and thought it no Rebellion? Your Highness perhaps will say, —What though they did so, true Protestants, and the *Church of England* do not own such principles? Well then, if the protestant principles be better than those of the Church of *Rome*, what madness is it in Your Highness to abandon the first, and chuse the latter?

I am a dutiful and hearty Lover of *Monarchy*, and when established on such an *Equi-pois'd Basis* of Wisdom as ours is, shall ever assert it to be the best Form of Government in the World, and most agreeable to the Genius of Englishmen: But that Lineal Descent is so sacred a thing, that the Heir presumptive can for no Default or Crime whatsoever be debarred from the Crown by an Act of Parliament, or publick Decree of State, I do not understand; for I am sure the practice in all Ages, both at Home and Abroad in almost every Nation in the Earth, hath run contrary: And as to Right; those that pretend such Succession in all Cases to be *Jure Divino*, would do well to shew in what Texts of Scripture the same is prescribed; till then, they do but talk, not argue; and if a Candidate to the Crown; for any Reasons whatsoever, may without offence to the Law of God or Nature, be Excluded by an Act of King, Lords and Commons; then the *Jure-divino-ship* vanishes, and nothing is left to be Considered: But whether such next Heir have done such Acts, or is so qualified, that in prudence it be necessary for the Tranquillity of the publick to Exclude him. Now I believe there are but few of the Church of *England*, but if the Bill had passed the *Lords*, and His Majesty had given his Royal Assent to it, would have acquiesc'd therein

therein, and consequently they do not believe the exclusion to be simply unlawful by the Laws of God or Nature, for against either of them no *Humane Ordinances* ought to prevail.

But all true Loyalists do not despair, but your Highness may yet prevent all Occasions of such Disputes by opening your eyes; or rather that God (in whose *hands are the Hearts of Princes*) may irradiate your Royal Understanding, and let you see the horrid *Blackness* of those Men who have endeavoured to seduce you, and of those *Principles* to which they would have inveigled you, on purpose to have made your Highness a *Property* to their *Ambition* and *Avarice*, and that under the shadow of your Illustrious Name they might one day *Tyrannize* at Pleasure over these Three Kingdoms.

If Heaven shall be pleased to work such an happy *Inclination* in your Highness, you shall presently see the whole *British Empire* echoing with Praises and *Acclamations*, and instead of murmurs of *Seclusion*, every good Subject shall erect you a *Throne* in his Heart.

But the grand difficulty will be to satisfie the prejudiced World of your *sincerity* herein, for if your Highness (which God forbid) should declare your self a Protestant only to serve a present turn, and use the Sacred Name of *our Religion* but as an Engine to advance the design of our *bloody Enemies*, you would act at once the most dishonourably, and (in the end) most *prejudicially* to your own Interest, in the World, and must certainly expect the *blasts* of Heaven, and *curses* of Earth on all your future proceedings; for *Hypocrisie* is odious to God and Man, nor is there any Monster so abominable to serious Men of both sides as a Church-*Papist*.

Your Royal Highness, I hope, will excuse our fears, for we are not ignorant of the Arts and Craft of *Rome*, that she esteems *no means unlawful* to obtain her *ends*. How shall any *Oaths* be sufficient Tests, when a private *dispensation* may at once allow the *taking*, and warrant the breaking of them? Or what signifies the participation of our *Sacraments* to one that is taught, we have no true *Ministers* of Christ; if so, no *Consecration*, consequently nothing but an *ordinary Breakfast* of common *Bread and Wine*; and who shall lose the hopes of three Crowns rather than not taste such harmless *viands*? Not that that I dare imagine your Highnesses Understanding would suffer you to believe the *lawfulness*, or your *Princely Generosity* permit you to practise these lewd *dissimulations*; yet since *such Doctrines* are daily taught in the *Roman* Church, how shall Protestants be assured they have no Influence on your Conduct? I must therefore with all humble freedom assure your Highness, that after so general an Opinion of your Highnesses having been a *Roman* Catholick, though you should go never so duly to Church, receive the Sacrament a *thousand times*, and take *Oaths* all the way from *Holy-rood* House to *St. James's*, yet the People would scarce believe the reality of your Conversion, unless withall they see it accompanied with some other *Demonstrations*. For as *Faith* without works is dead, so Profession of a Religion, without agreeable endeavours to advance it will be vain. If his Royal Highness, will the People say, be *a good Protestant*, he will undoubtedly discourage *all Papists*, the sworn inveterate Enemies of our Religion, he will not suffer a Popish Priest to approach his Person or Palace. If he *have had* any intimation of any ill designs, if any have been tampering to reconcile him to *Popery* (which is no less than *Treason*) he will presently detect those *mischievous Instruments*, that they may be brought to condign Punishment, and applaud the *Justice* that has been done on *Coleman*, the five Jesuits,

lists, *Godfrey's* Murderers, *&c.* thereby stopping the Mouths of that brazen Tribe who would make the World believe they died *innocently*. He will declare against all *Arbitrary* Designs, detest those who by *sneaking flatteries* would unhing the ancient and most wise Constitution of our Government. He will heartily recommend *Parliaments* to his *Sacred Brother* as the wisest and *safest* Councils, and even *thank* the late *House of Commons* for their *zeal* against him, whilst they apprehended him as an *Enemy* to his King, and the Religion and safety of the Kingdom. He will vigorously by his Counsels and Interests oppose the the growing greatness of the *French*, which at this day threatens all *Europe* with *Chains*, and immediately tends not only to the decay of *Great Britains* Trade and Glory, but also to the diminution, *oppression*, and (if it lay in humane Power) utter *subversion* of the *Reformed Religion* throughout the World.

These and the like *Noble Fruits*, will the People not unreasonaby expect from your *R. H.* when ever you shall please to declare your self a Protestant; which that you may speedily do, not Politickly or *Superficially*, but with that *sincerity*, as so serious a matter (of infinite more *value* than the Three Crowns you are Presumptive Heir to) is the *Prayer* of all good Men, and particularly of

Your Royal Highness's

Most Humble and

Faithful Servant,

Philanax Verax.

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